



'Moses and the Crown'
Jan Steen (1626-1679)
Mauritshuis, The Hague





'Moses and the Crown'
Guido Reni (1575 - 1642),
National Galleries, Edinburgh



Speculum Humanae Salvationis, 1450
Museum Meermanno, The Hague

Limmud * Moses and the Crown

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1. **Did Moshe really have a speech impediment?** א.
Exodus 4:10 שמות ד'י'
But Moses said to ה', "Please, O my lord,
I have never been a **man of words**, either
in times past or now that You have
spoken to Your servant; I am slow of
speech and slow of tongue."
וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־ה' בִּי אֲדוּשָׁם לֹא
אִישׁ דְּבָרִים אָנֹכִי גַם מִתְּמוֹל גַּם
מִשְׁלָשִׁם גַּם מֵאָז דִּבַּרְתָּ אֶל־עַבְדְּךָ כִּי
כְבֹד־פֶּה וְכְבֹד לָשׁוֹן אָנֹכִי:
2. **חזקוני, שמות ד'י:ד'** ב.
**כי כבד פה. לפי שברחתי ממצרים בקטנתי ועכשיו בן שמונים שנה
אנכי וכבר שכחתי לשון מצרי אבל אהרן לא אז משם ויודע לשונם.**
3. **Ezekiel 3:5** יחזקאל ג'ה' ג.
For you are sent, not to a people of
unintelligible speech and difficult
language, but to the House of Israel
כִּי לֹא אֶל־עַם עִמְקֵי שְׂפָה וְכְבֹדִי
לָשׁוֹן אֶתָּה שְׁלוּחַ אֶל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל:
4. **There is a certain irony in the title of the last Book of Moses** ד.
Deuteronomy 1:1 דברים א'א'
(1) These are the **words that Moses**
addressed to all Israel on the other side of
the Jordan.—Through the wilderness, in
the Arabah near Suph, between Paran
and Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Di-
zahab,
(א) אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר מֹשֶׁה
אֶל־כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן בְּמִדְבַּר
בְּעֶרְבָה מִזֶּה סוּף בֵּין־פָּאָרָן וּבֵין־תּוֹפֵל
וּלְבָן וְחֶזְרֹת וְדִי זָהָב:
5. **The answer of the Midrash, as it spread like wildfire across Christian Europe
in the 13th century** ה.
Sine volmaectheit was so scone Ende seide dit kint sla wi doot
Hi sette hem sine crone up thovet So si wi quite van alre noot
Daer an gemaect was des gelovet Mar farao behilt hem tleven
Ene ymage van iupiterre •I• ander vroet was daer beneven
6. **Sine volmaectheit was so scone Ende seide dit kint sla wi doot**
Hi sette hem sine crone up thovet So si wi quite van alre noot
Daer an gemaect was des gelovet Mar farao behilt hem tleven
Ene ymage van iupiterre •I• ander vroet was daer beneven

*Tkint nam die crone ende was erre Ende seide dat hem kintscheit dede
 Ende werpse ontwe tegen die vloer Doe provediit daer ter stede
 Mettien ·i· vroet man up voer Hi brochte hete colen tier stont
 Daer warpt ene in sinen mont*

Middle Dutch **Rijmbijbel** by Jacob van Maerlant, 13th century

7. *An time after dat ðif was don, Hamonef likenef was ðor-on; .ז.
 Ghe brogte him bi-foren pharaon, ðis crune is broken, ðif is misdon.
 And ðif king wurd him in herte mild, He bad ðis child brennen to colen
 So swiðe faiger was ðif child; And he toc is hu migt he it ðolen,
 And he toc him on sunes stede, And in hife muth so depe he if dede
 And hif corune on his heued he dede, Hife tunges ende if brent ðor-mide;
 And let it stonden ayne stund; ðor-fore feide de ebru witterlike,
 ðe child it warp dun to de grund. dat he spac siðen miserlike;*

Middle English **Rhymed Genesis and Exodus**, 1250

8. **The background of all of this: 12th Century Renaissance in France** .ח.
Rashbam on Genesis 37:2:1
 The **lovers of intelligence** should understand what our sages taught us that no verse may legitimately be explained in a manner which contradicts the plain meaning of the text... Also Rabbeinu Shlomoh, my mother's father (Rashi)...admitted to me that if only he had the opportunity, he would compose additional commentaries according to the **new insights** in the **plain meaning** that emerge each day
- רשב"ם על בראשית ל"ז:ב:א'
 ישכילו ויבינו אוהבי שכל מה
 שלימדונו רבותינו, כי אין מקרא יוצא
 מידי פשוטו... וגם רבינו שלמה אבי
 אמי... הודה לי שאילו היה לו פנאי,
 היה צריך לעשות פירושים אחרים לפי
 הפשטות המתחדשים בכל יום
9. **The justification for Jewish engagement with Christian Priests** .ט.
Pirkei Avot 2:14
 Rabbi Elazar said: Be diligent in the study of the Torah; And **know how to answer an epicuro**s
- משנה אבות ב'י"ד
 רבי אלעזר אומר, הוי שקוד ללמד
 תורה, ודע מה שתשיב לאפיקורוס
10. **Rashbam (1085 – 1158) discussing the quality of Latin Bible translations with Christians** .י.
 רשב"ם על שמות כ"י:ג:א'
 הריגה ומיתה יש בחנם... ויש בדין... זו תשובה שהשבתי
 לאפיקורסים והודו לי. ואף על פי שיש בספריהם "אני אמית ואחיה" בלשון
 לטיין של "לא תרצח", הם לא דקדקו.

On the Fall from Grace — **Hebreus dicit** quamvis rudiores et brutiores, simpliciores tamen et innocentiores homines esse futuros, si de hoc ligno non gustassent. “**The Hebrew says** that men would have been ruder and more brutish like animals, but simpler and more innocent, had they not tasted of this tree; it was called the tree of knowledge of good and evil, because they who tasted it were to become sharper at knowing what was good, but astuter at devising evil... The Jew asserts that like children they did not notice their nakedness and therefore were not ashamed.’

On Isaiah 7:14 — ‘These are the darts which the Jews hurl against us, calling us **perverters and violent distorters of Holy Writ**. There is no need for us to answer them, since others have done so before us; but whether their answer is sufficient, let those who have answered judge... Let us continue the explanation of the **literal sense** (sensus litteralis) which we have begun.’

On Ezekiel 1:5 — ‘Below the fire would appear the aspect, as it were, of a certain celestial creature which they call hasmal. When they are asked what is the use of this creature in heavenly things, or its shape or colour, whether reason grants that it can live there, whether it has been seen anywhere on earth, they don't know quite what to answer.’

Andrew, Prior at St. Victor in Paris till 1147 (later Abbot at Wigmore, Herefordshire)

Isaiah 6:5-7

(5) I cried,
 “Woe is me; I am lost!
 For I am a man of impure lips
 And I live among a people
 Of impure lips;
 Yet my own eyes have beheld
 The Sovereign GOD of Hosts.” (6) Then
 one of the seraphs—who had taken a live
 coal from the altar with a pair of tongs—
 flew over to me, (7) touched it to my
 lips, and declared,
 “Now that this has touched your lips,
 Your guilt shall depart
 And your sin be purged away.”

ישעיהו ו'ה-ז'

(ה) וְאָמַר אֲוִי־לִי כִי־נִדְמִיתִי כִּי אִישׁ
 טָמֵא־שִׁפְתַיִם אָנֹכִי וּבְתוֹךְ עַם־טָמֵא
 שִׁפְתַיִם אָנֹכִי יוֹשֵׁב כִּי אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ ה'
 צָבֵאוֹת רָאוּ עֵינָי: (ו) וַיַּעַף אֵלַי אֶחָד
 מִן־הַשְּׂרָפִים וּבְיָדוֹ רִצְפָה בְּמִלְקָחַיִם
 לָקַח מֵעַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: (ז) וַיִּגַע עַל־פִּי
 וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה נִגַּע זֶה עַל־שִׁפְתֶיךָ וְסָר
 עֲוֹנֶךָ וְחַטָּאתֶךָ תִּכַּפֵּר:

13. **Devarim Rabbah 2:4** דברים רבה ב'ד' .ג.
There were none greater among the prophets than Moses and Isaiah אין לך גדול בנביאים מִמֹּשֶׁה וְיִשְׁעִיָּהוּ

14. ביאור הלכה תכ"ח:ד'ד' .ד.
ט"ב קודם - והטעם כדי שיקראו בה בפרשת דברים שהיא מתוכחותיו של משה קודם ט"ב כדי להפטיר בה בחזון שהיא תוכחות ישעיה על חורבן

15. **A modern reinterpretation of the Prophet & Coal theme** .טו.
Alexander Pushkin, The Prophet, 1826 (*Transl. Yevgeny Bonver*)

With his sharp sword, he cleaved my breast,
And plucked my quivering heart out,
And **coals flamed** with God's behest,
Into my **gaping breast** were ground.

Like dead, I lay on desert sands,
And listening to God's commands:
'Arise, O prophet, hark and see,
Be filled with utter My demands,
And, going over Land and Sea,
Burn with The Word the humane hearts.'

